

The Health of African Americans Living in Seattle

**A Special Report to the Seattle City Council
April 1999**

TO: The Honorable Sue Donaldson, President, Seattle City Council
FROM: Alonzo L. Plough, Director, Public Health - Seattle & King County
VIA: The Honorable Paul Schell, Mayor, City of Seattle
CC: Dwight Dively, Director, Executive Services Division

SUBJECT: The Health of African Americans Living In Seattle

In response to a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) that was passed with the Health Department's 1999-2000 budget, I am pleased to present to you ***The Health of African Americans Living In Seattle*** which provides a comprehensive look at the health conditions of African Americans in our community.

This report provides the following:

- A comprehensive overview and summary of the African American population's health status, which indicate that while some progress has been made, challenges still exist. Serious disparities in health indicators continue: some disparities such as overall mortality and infant mortality have grown. Mortality due to diabetes, colorectal cancer, and drug-related causes are increasing. At least one in five African Americans do not have health insurance.
- A high level summary of current Health Department programs that specifically target the African American population and the personal health, community health and some population based services that serve the African American population.
- A report and summary of the work of the Department's African American Health Roundtable discussions which has identified gaps in service and recommendations. Among those recommendations are an all-day health conference and development of an African American inventory or website to facilitate education and outreach.

The challenge to the Health Department is to attack these disparities with programs and services while striking a balance to serve the entire City. Some progress has been made. The life expectancy of African Americans has increased; teen birth rates among African Americans has decreased; and mortality due to heart disease and liver disease among African Americans has decreased.

The Health Department remains committed to addressing the health concerns of African Americans in our community with our community partners.

My hope is that this report not only presents a complete picture of the health of African Americans in our community but serves as a beginning point for future discussion with the Council.